

years ago: life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, together.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:34 p.m. in the Amphitheater. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado and Mayor Wellington Webb of Denver and his wife, Wilma.

Remarks Honoring Martin Luther King, Jr., in Los Angeles, California
January 16, 1995

The President. Thank you. Are you having a good time?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Well, so am I. And I'm glad to be here again. I want to thank all the people who are here, all the elected officials and the clergy and the people on the board of Community Build. I thank Brenda Shockley for her fine work. Yes, give her a hand. She's great. [Applause] I thank Marla Gibbs and Robert Hooks for their work tonight. And I thought Linda Hopkins was great. I was back there listening to her sing behind the curtain. And it's wonderful to see Rosa Parks and Cicely Tyson here. I'm honored to be in their presence, as always. I want to thank the young people behind me who met with me for a few moments before I came out here: Charles Rousseau, who is one of our Faces of Hope; my friends from the playground; and all the others who are back there who told me about what this effort is all about, who talked to me about Community Build in terms that anybody could understand.

Ladies and gentlemen, when I ran for President and I came here to south central L.A., I, first of all, knew my way around a little bit because I had actually come here before I ever dreamed of running for President, just because I was interested in what was happening to you and how we were going to build with the challenges we face.

And I said that I thought my job, if you would let me be President, was to do three things: first, to try to get the economy going again; second, to try to have a Government that worked in a way that made sense for people at the grassroots level and would take us into the 21st century. It would be less bu-

reaucratic. It could even be smaller, but it would be able to do more in partnership with people where they live, so that when you pay your taxes you would think you were getting your money's worth for a change. But the third and most important thing that I thought we had to do as a people that the President had to be a part of was to create a new agreement between the people and their Government and between the people, themselves, what I called a new covenant, a commitment to extend more opportunity in return for people assuming responsibility for their own lives, their own families, their own communities, for changing the things that have to be changed. That's the only way we're ever going to straighten this country out is if we have more opportunity and more responsibility, if people really believe that we can make a difference.

You know why I like being here? Because these people have proved that they can change their lives. And if they can do it, we can change America.

I work with Maxine Waters and with Mayor Riordan on a lot of things, and you are fortunate to be represented as you are. I tell you, the mayor just showed up and he's had an earthquake, a fire, and a flood. [Laughter] I asked him if he thought God had hidden a volcano somewhere in Los Angeles County, and then you could become a new tourist mecca as a full-service disaster area. [Laughter] You know why we can laugh about that? Because you keep coming back. You've got good leadership and good grassroots folks and a spirit that won't quit.

And I was looking at Congresswoman Waters up here giving her talk tonight. And I was thinking, I wonder if those people have any idea how she worries the President to death in Washington until he does what she wants him to do. [Laughter] The first time she looked at me like that—the way she can look at you if she thinks you're not going to do the right thing—after I became President, I said, "Maxine, I'm the President; you don't have to look at me like that anymore." She said, "Oh no, I have to look at you more like that now." [Laughter]

I'm proud of the fact that the Labor Department put \$7 million in this project, because I think that Community Build and the

Youth Fair Chance Plus programs represent all three of the things that I set out to do. We're helping people become part of the economy, and that's important. Work gives dignity to life. People need an education. They need a job. They need a future, to give dignity to life.

And we're changing the way the Government works. We're reducing the size of Government, and we've taken \$11,000 in debt off of every family in America by reducing that deficit, and that gives our kids a better future. But we also have to prove that we can change the present, and that's what this program does. And the Federal Government should be involved in programs like this, non-bureaucratic people programs that build people up instead of tearing them down.

And I like it because it does build that new covenant. It says, "Okay, here's your opportunity." But you know, we can be spending \$700 million here, and if people like these guys behind me hadn't decided they were going to change on the inside and do differently, the money would not make any difference. So we've got it all going in the right direction.

I say to you tonight, my friends, that if Dr. King could be here, and I think he is here in a way, he'd be pretty pleased with what we're doing here. I know that much remains to be done. I know that in the atmosphere of the present where people have been told that everything the Government does is bad, it will be hard to continue.

But let me tell you something: Los Angeles and the cities around here and California and America are better off because of programs like this and better off because we're giving communities more funds to help deal with the crime problem, not only to hire more police officers but also to give young people some activities they can be engaged in that are positive so they have something to say yes to as well as something to say no to. These things matter. And we can make a difference. I know we must do more, but we should do more in ways that make sense.

I'm proud of the fact that this week it was announced that we not only have seen over 5½ million new jobs come into this economy since I became President, but the unemployment rate among African-Americans is at a

20-year low. I'm proud of that. Now, that's the good news. The bad news is that the unemployment rate among young people is still very high, over one in three, and that among people who do not have much education, the unemployment rate is very high and the wages of those that work tend to be low and to stay there. So in the coming year, with this new Congress, I'm going to say to them, "You say you want the free enterprise system to work. You say you want more business people in minority communities. Well, so do I. Let's begin with passing my middle class bill of rights."

If we're going to cut people's taxes, let's cut them for education and for raising children, to do things that will strengthen all the American people and build this country up from the grassroots up. And if we're going to cut spending, let's cut things that will free up money to build up people. Let's don't cut programs like this one. Let's don't cut programs like the national service program. Let's don't cut programs like Head Start. Let's don't make it more expensive for people to go to college, let's make it cheaper for people to go to college and more affordable.

In other words, the role of Government should not be to pretend that we can solve problems that people have to solve for themselves, often inside their own heart. But the role of Government should not be to be heartless, either, and to walk away. The Government should be a partner. The Government should help people to acquire the tools they need and the means they need and the education they need and the belief and the hope they need to make the most of their own lives. That is what we're here to celebrate today. That is what Martin Luther King wanted us to do.

You know, when Dr. King gave that famous "I Have A Dream" speech, he said that his dream was deeply rooted in the American dream. What is the American dream? The founders of our country said it over 200 years ago: We hold these truths to be self-evident that all are created equal, endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness. No, not a guarantee of happiness, but not death, destruction, and the end of hope,

either, the means of working together to achieve the God-given potential of every person in this room, every person in south central Los Angeles, all the people in this country.

It is not a dream rooted in race. Race became a factor when people could not see behind their own prejudice. And I tell you today, my friends, that when we realize what a resource we have in America, that we come from so many different racial backgrounds, that we come from so many different ethnic backgrounds, that we come from so many religious backgrounds, in a global society where the world is smaller and smaller and smaller, we are the world's richest country because of our differences. Now we must find common ground and build up all people, and, no, we don't have a person to spare. All these children have a role in our future, every one of them.

So I'm glad to be back in south central Los Angeles. I want these young men to help me find the secret to get people like this all across America to say no to violence and no to drugs and no to the life of the street with no tomorrow and yes to a better future. We can do this. We can do it if we work together. We can do it if we talk together. We can do it if we believe in one another's potential. That is the American dream.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:41 p.m. at Community Build, Inc. In his remarks, he referred to Brenda Shockley, executive director, Community Build, Inc.; masters of ceremonies Marla Gibbs and Robert Hooks; civil rights activist Rosa Parks; and actress Cicely Tyson.

Remarks at California State University at Northridge, California *January 17, 1995*

Thank you. What a great day. Thank you very much. Thank you so much, Mayor Riordan. Thank you for your outstanding leadership, for being such a good working partner, for putting the interest of all the people of this community first. Thank you, Dr. Wilson, for your leadership and for hosting this wonderful event on this beautiful campus with its beautiful buildings, all standing, thank

goodness. I'm glad to see you all here. I thank Congressman Berman and Congressman McKeon, Lieutenant Governor Davis, Supervisor Yaroslavsky, and of course, the people who are here with me today. I'd like to introduce them all: the Secretary of Transportation, Federico Peña; the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Henry Cisneros; and the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, James Lee Witt. They have done a great job for you.

Ladies and gentlemen, even as we recall the devastation here today, we know that nature has struck again here at home in California with the floods and with the extraordinary fury in the earthquake in Japan. I know all of you join with me in extending our profound condolences to the families of those in the Osaka-Kobe area of Japan who have suffered such a tremendous loss in the last day.

We have spoken with the Japanese Government and, with their agreement, based on our experiences here, I have ordered a high-level team that includes representatives of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Department of Transportation to leave for Japan shortly to see if anything we learned here can be helpful to them there.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General John Shalikashvili, is in Japan now and he has already stated that our military forces there are also available to help them in any appropriate way. You know what they're going through.

So I'd like to ask before I begin my remarks, if we could just have a moment of silence for the victims of the flood here in California and the victims of the earthquake in Japan.

[At this point, the audience observed a moment of silence.]

Thank you.

I am so glad to be here at Cal State Northridge. You are now the symbol of the ability of the people of this State to keep coming back after adversity upon adversity, as well as the symbol of California and America's future, because of the educational opportunities open to all kinds of people from all walks of life and all different backgrounds here at this fine institution.